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Editor's Preface

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The lead article of Perla Makil on Philippine "Social-Problems Research" gathers together and comments on some of the major work done during the period 1970-80 on poverty-research in the Philippines, with the accompanying problems of income, employment, nutrition, housing and resettlement, in both urban (mostly Metro-Manila) and rural areas. In addition, the survey covers three other areas: population studies, research into the status of women in Philippine society, and approaches to how the poor might exercise greater control in the efforts to overcome their problems. Interesting facts and figures, comparisons and vignettes, are presented, ranging from comparative views of urban elites and lower-income respondents regarding their major problems, to sari-sari store operations, Baguio City peddlers, and the relocation of squatters. While keeping to an objective presentation of the research data, the author manages to weave together a fascinating account of the poor Filipino's lot as pictured in social science studies over the past decade.

"Viscera-Suckers and Female Sociality: the Philippine Asuang" by Raul Pertierra, provides a different set of data, this time drawn from ethnological sources dealing with the "asuang complex," a set of images and ideas found in both lowland and highland Philippine communities. After describing the five basic classes of asuangs the author shows how the asuangs function in Philippine society: as related to the basic human themes of pregnancy, disease and death; as symbols for communicating states of fear, anxiety and apprehension; and as explanations for otherwise incomprehensible experiences, and so forth. While other spirits are often placated by sacrificial rituals, rites relating to asuangs always stress expulsion and exclusion. Taking asuangs as "creatures who intrude into the most intimate affairs and spaces of life without acknowledging any basis for the rule of reciprocity," the author relates them to "female sociality," (which may well cause

some reactions from local proponents of women's liberation!) He concludes that despite regional differences and variations, "the homogeneity of the Philippines as a culture area allows the belief-complex to adapt itself to specific socio-cultural differences."

The following scholarly article on "The Agrarian Proletariat in the Rice-Growing Areas of the Philippines," by Filomeno V. Aguilar, presents a well-documented study of the causes and results of today's increasing landlessness. The "Green Revolution" and the government-stimulated corporate farms have caused serious socio-economic dislocations, heightened by population pressures and uneven industrialization. A peasant proletariat is being created, composed of landless households (ranging from 19 percent in Pangasinan to 48 percent in Iloilo) as well as households owning or leasing lands too small to support the family (often due to the fragmentation of farms). New employment trends in the rice farming areas are studied, including the *kabisilya* and the *sagod/gama* systems. The author concludes that not only the "big and the rich," but also the "small and poor" stand accused. Recalling the Biblical theme of "fallen human nature," this serious social scientist asks if "the development debate will not have to contend with more fundamental issues such as the human proclivity to exploit others whenever given the opportunity, and whether 'structural' or 'systematic' change is sufficient to eliminate this human frailty?"

Charles Lindsey's study of "Technology, Skill and Economic Development" raises some theoretical issues drawn from existing studies on foreign investment and economic development in the Philippines. The author explains: "the proponents and critics of foreign investment have generally talked past each other — the former have focused on narrow economic matters while the latter on politics or political economy." The article tries to join the issue more directly.

Finally, Fr. Francisco Mallari, S.J., presents an intriguing note on "Nineteenth-Century Spanish Bureaucracy," which started by questioning why a short, crooked street of Naga City should be called "Dinagâ," or in Pilipino, "rat infested place." Such was the start of uncovering the history of the "canalization project," and of the admirable work of the Spanish administrators. Pleasant reading!